

Job Description

Job Title	Virtual School Headteacher
Grade	EPO25
Reporting To	Assistant Director - Education
JD Ref	PC0067P

Purpose

Champion the needs and improved outcomes for Children with social worker both across the authority and for those placed out-of-authority and provide high quality strategic leadership for the Virtual School to ensure that Children with a social worker have access to high quality educational places and achieve the very best educationally.

Provide high quality strategic leadership for the council's strategy to close the educational gap between disadvantaged children and their peers acting as a champion for these children, monitoring and challenging schools and settings, sharing good practice and ensuring good relationships between partners.

Main Duties And Responsibilities

Behavioural:

- Enjoy, achieve, create impact, and thrive in the role and organisation.
- Live our values and leadership behaviours in the role and organisation.
- Contribute to meeting Wirral Children's Services priorities through the following:-
- **Promote opportunity for all children and young people in Wirral**
- **Doing the right thing for children and families**
- **Children who come into care are better off because of it**

Team Leadership and Management:

- Provide strong leadership, strengthening engagement, growth, culture, innovation, collaboration and performance.
- Assign responsibilities, setting clear expectations, and deliverables to team members and empower them to excel in their roles.
- Through continuous improvement strengthen the tools, practices and impact of the service.
- Line manage the Virtual School Team to ensure that it has high impact on improving the outcomes for Children Looked After.

Communication, Engagement and Training:

- Ensure that staff and key stakeholders are briefed appropriately in relation to Council wide communications and matters relevant to the Service area.
- Provide multi-agency training events to improve the knowledge and understanding of all key stakeholders of the diverse educational needs of Children with a social worker.
- Provide advice and support to social care colleagues around the most appropriate educational provision for hard to place young people in Court
- Represent the service and the Council in internal and external meetings as required, acting with the authority of the Assistant Director: Children's Services to sustain and improve the overall reputation of the Council and the service.
- Advise both, the Council, schools, settings and providers on the strategies for monitoring and evaluating the progress of vulnerable groups including those on Free School Meals, those with English as an Additional Language any other vulnerable groups.

Data Analysis and Decision-Making:

- Ensure the effective analysis of gap data, share this with relevant stakeholders and use this to challenge underperformance as well as celebrate success and good practice.
- Exercise a substantial degree of decision making, independent professional responsibility and discretion. Use professional knowledge and understanding to improve performance and efficiency and alert senior managers to potentially significant risks.
- Use professional knowledge to make proposals on resources, objectives and targets for service planning or recommendations.
- Apply knowledge and appropriate legal, statutory and policy frameworks that inform good practice and practice development.
- Forge partnerships and build positive working relationships and negotiate with and influence key Council decision-makers and other stakeholders.
- Manage complex decision-making to ensure mitigation of risks and prioritisation. Make judgements where decisions may need to be escalated to the Assistant Director/Deputy Director.

Performance Management:

- Ensure that the Virtual School monitors and tracks the progress of Children in Looked After, and challenge underperformance at an individual, school and service level.
- Monitor and review progress against plans and targets, directing others to take corrective action where necessary to ensure the service meets expectations.
- Identify changes, trends and emerging initiatives and lead on change and transformation, recommending innovative/commercial approaches to service delivery to senior management.



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Resources

- Deploy and manage staff, promote learning and development through supervision, appraisal and training using the directorate workforce development plan to ensure that all services work within the directorate business planning framework and all teams have clear objectives with service, team and individual targets which are regularly monitored and reported.
- Lead quality assurance activity to ensure practice is of consistently high quality, meets all statutory requirements and complies with national and local policies and procedures to ensure that the service is prepared for an Ofsted Inspection.
- Manage Service Level Agreements and contracts put in place to meet the needs of children and young people in Wirral and work collaboratively with commissioners to ensure that commissioned services are appropriate, value for money and produce the required impact.
- Advise the Assistant Director, Director and Elected Members on the strategic and operational matters related to the specific responsibilities of the post to ensure agreed outcomes for Children Young People are met.
- Ensure that effective and efficient use is made of the resources allocated to the service to meet the objectives of the Council.
- Ensure that all activities within the function and associate transformation and improvement work meet the standards of good corporate governance, probity and integrity.
- Promote positive and constructive relationships between the Children's Service with settings, schools and providers to ensure that their views inform service delivery and improvements where required.
- Responsible for ensuring service delivery functions in a manner compliant with Information Governance requirements, the Data Protection Act and professional standards of confidentiality.

Planning and Organising

- Maintain an up-to-date roll of its looked after children who are in school or college settings and gather information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress.
- Inform head teachers and designated teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is looked after by the local authority.
- Ensure social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the child's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP.
- Ensure up-to-date, effective and high quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes and that all looked after children, wherever they are placed, have such a PEP.
- Ensure the educational achievement of children looked-after by the authority is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment of looked after children through the authority's corporate parenting structures.
- Manage own workload, ensuring appropriate prioritisation of work based on mitigating risk, statutory requirements and key performance targets.
- Responsible for facilitating the setting of future strategic direction of the service, working will be to a planning horizon of a number of years.
- Responsible for overseeing the delivery of key deadlines related to the service functions.



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- Adopt a flexible approach ensuring the ability to adapt to changing priorities as required.

Compliance:

- Adhere to and comply with all relevant corporate policies and procedures including Health & Safety, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Corporate Governance and Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that all service initiatives adhere to relevant legislation, policies and practices.
- Discharge the Local Authority's statutory duty under 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children. That includes those children placed out-of-authority.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 amends section 22 of the Children Act 1989 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children is properly discharged.

Other:

- Any other duties commensurate with the grade.
- Ensure that there are arrangements in place to:
- Promote a culture that takes account of the child's views according to age and understanding in identifying and meeting their educational needs
- Help others, especially Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), social workers, carers and schools, understand the importance of listening to and taking account of the child's wishes and feelings about education and the PEP process and how the Head of Education for vulnerable children can help facilitate that process.

Role Specific Knowledge, Experience And Skills

Qualifications

- Educated to Degree Level.
- Evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- *Desirable - Qualifications in a related specialist field*

Knowledge & Skills

- A clear understanding of leadership strategies.
- An understanding of data, how best to analyse that data and its impact on performance.
- Experience of managing staff and HR issues.
- A clear understanding of the local and national agenda for the delivery of high quality educational provision.
- A clear understanding of Safeguarding, Child Protection and Information Sharing issues.
- Ability to communicate effectively with a range of people orally and in writing.
- Ability to analyse and evaluate quantitative and qualitative data and report findings clearly and succinctly.
- Ability to lead and motivate a team to deliver high quality services.
- Ability to plan so as to deploy resources efficiently and effectively.



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- Well organised, self-motivated and show integrity.
- Show a high level of professionalism.
- Confident user of IT as a work tool.
- Good interpersonal skills including the ability to work effectively with a range of people and agencies.
- Ability to work collaboratively.
- *Desirable - Devising and implementing effective monitoring systems to evaluate impact.*

Experience

- Senior Leadership experience in a LA or school.
- Building and leading successful teams.
- Leading and managing major initiatives.
- Experience of working in a cross-directorate and cross-agency nature.
- Thinking strategically to build a clear vision to inspire others and to carry the vision forward.
- Experience of developing and implementing key Council strategies for improving the educational outcomes of Children in Care and other vulnerable groups.
- Experience of managing significant budgets and service level agreements.
- *Desirable - Strategic leadership in a LA or school.*
- *Desirable - Experience of using presentation, database and spreadsheet software.*

Additional Information

Ability to travel across the Borough and work from various locations.

Work hybrid, with a flexible working approach to accommodate service needs.

Expected to work from a fixed location (subject to change).

On occasion, able to work outside traditional hours, of a weekend and evening as required, adopting a flexible working approach in response to business requirements.

Health & Safety Considerations: Prolonged Repetitive Movements/Actions

- Lone working
- Work with VDUs (Video Display Unit) (>5hrs per week)
- Working with children

**Approved By: James Backhouse, Assistant Director:
Education**

Date Of Approval: 27.01.2025



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